

“DA WAREN DEUTSCHE AUCH DABEI!” THE STORY OF A TEXAS-GERMAN FAMILY

by Waltraud Bartscht

In recent years a poem by the German-American writer Konrad Krez (1828-1897) has been widely distributed in this country. It enumerates the contributions of the German immigrants to the development of American civilization. Alluding to the farmers, craftsmen, scholars, musicians, and soldiers of German descent, Krez proudly states: “Da waren Deutsche auch dabei” (“Germans were there too”). I became personally aware of the validity of this assertion when I gained access to the diaries and documents of a German pioneer family from Bellville, Texas. The story of Fritz Schlecht and his descendants is characteristic of many of the Germans who brought their talents and skills to their new homeland.

Fritz Schlecht (born in Bunzlau, Silesia, in 1816) was a coppersmith by trade. He had a keen and critical mind, with artistic, musical, and scientific interests. Although he modestly claimed to be a simple craftsman whose hand was more used to the hammer than to the pen, examples of his exquisite penmanship can still be seen in his diaries and a handwritten songbook. He also created charming pen-and-ink drawings as illustrations for a book on natural history (see figure 1, for example). Moreover, he was a lively narrator who even possessed poetic talents; a few examples have survived. His small book *Mein Ausflug nach Texas* (*My Excursion to Texas*), published in Bunzlau in 1851, was written at the request of his friends.

There are no records to explain why Schlecht left Germany in the spring of 1848. It is quite possible that he was somewhat involved in the political upheavals of that year, although he did not clearly state that fact. He was able to return after several months. From his own words about his departure, the reader may surmise the reasons for the journey.

Shortly after the eventful March days of the year 1848, I boarded the train coming from Breslau, having bidden a sorrowful farewell to my dear ones at home and to my many friends who had gathered at the train station. I was to travel via Berlin to Bremen and from there to far-away Texas. In a few minutes my home town, with everything that was dear to my heart, lay behind me. I will gladly refrain from describing the emotions I felt at that time. (*Mein Ausflug*, p. 1)

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FIG. 1. DRAWING OF SQUIRREL BY FRITZ SCHLECHT, from a handbook on natural history.

Fritz Schlecht gives amusing accounts of the life aboard the good ship *Antoinette* on which he sailed from Bremen to Galveston. The conditions must have been anything but pleasant, yet he never lost his sense of humor or his appreciation for the beauties of nature.

Whenever I came on deck while the people still "dined" there, I smoked my cigar or my pipe on the poop deck, in order to see as little as possible of the ship's food. Very frequently on those occasions funny scenes happened, because most passengers sat immediately on the deck. Now it occurred quite often that a spray surged over the deck and all the eaters suddenly sat in the water; there resulted every time a very fast uprising in the true sense of the word, and many collisions and spillings of food. Another time the ship quickly turned on one side, whereby it happened that all the eating utensils slid to that side and the owners had to fetch them back. After the meal the uncouth coxswain distributed the drinking water in a very partial way. (We got daily about as much as a small half quart. If there was a calm, which happened several times in the West Indies and in the Gulf of Mexico, during that time nothing at all was given out. We had to suffer thirst dreadfully.)

... During and right after the sunset probably most of the passengers enjoy the beautifully colored sky: this splendor of colors and formation of the clouds a person from the northlands cannot even imagine. Soon it is completely dark and at several places on deck there is singing. Songs such as "Prince Eugen, the noble knight," "Schleswig-Holstein," etc., have been entirely worn out here. When we are tired of listening, we converse on the poop deck. After 8:00 P.M. some go into the cabin and play Whist with the captain until after twelve. After ten o'clock everybody goes to his bunk, but because of the heat no one can fall asleep. When slumber finally has come, the baby in the bunk next to the steerage will not fail to sound its squawk and not to end it very soon. After this howling child has sung a quarter of an hour, his parents begin to quarrel and to punish the child: in that way the noise becomes greater and from all parts of the lower deck come threatening, scolding, and mocking words. This is the fortissimo, and just as the uproar increased, so it dies down again and finally the decrescendo is extended only by the howling child who had given the keynote. In spite of my anger about the disturbed sleep, several times I was not able to refrain from bursting out with resounding laughter, thus perfecting this vocal concert from the steerage area. (Pp. 17-19)

Finally the *Antoinette* arrived in Galveston. After a few days in that city, Fritz Schlecht took a steamboat to Houston. Since he had a great interest in animals and plants, he made careful notes of his observations.

These shores, sand banks, and tree trunks projecting from the water are teeming with the most different species of swamp birds and water fowl. Numerous turtles that have been sitting on those trunks plunge head over heels into the water and quickly dive down when the ship gets near them. Here and there lies an alligator, at times calmly keeping its position, at times also lowering itself into the water at the approach of the ship.

... From this point the bayou became narrower and narrower and the forests on the shores became truly enchantingly beautiful. These woodlands, consisting of various species of nut, oak, plane-trees, cypress, cedars, laurels, cottonwoods, acacias, catalpas, persimmons, the magnificent magnolias, and many other trees unknown to me, are crowding close to the shore, so that the mighty tree limbs hang far out over the water. It is as if one were sailing through a fairy garden that has risen from the sea. (Pp. 54-55)

Fritz Schlecht does not hesitate to reveal his emotions when the small daughter of a friend reminds him of his own daughter back home in Bunzlau; but he also soberly and carefully comments on the advantages and disadvantages of the climate and soil conditions in this land he is exploring. His description of a chance encounter with a band of Comanche Indians is especially entertaining. He recalls it as follows (Schlecht rides by accident into a Comanche camp):

When I had recovered from my first scare, I recalled the rules of my good host at the Medina River. In a situation like the one in which I found myself, he had advised me to dismount, to hang my weapons on the saddle, calmly to turn to the chieftain and to greet him trustingly. I wanted to do that now, but which one was the chieftain? I had believed he would wear some mark of his office, but here one was as scantily dressed as the other. Finally I dismounted and walked toward the one who appeared to be the oldest: I was not in error. Greeting him in English, I held out my hand, showing as friendly and unconcerned a face as possible. He looked at me with a piercing glance, but finally after some hesitation he gave me his hand. After that he immediately invited me to go to the fire with him and to take a seat there. This invitation, as well as the whole conversation which occurred later between us, took place through a very lively sign language, since none of them understood a word of English. (P. 128)

Soon after we sat down the chief uttered a peculiar call, whereupon a young woman appeared who stood still in surprise when she saw me, and soon hurried away after the chief had said something to her in strange gargling and smacking sounds. The men, about fifteen to eighteen, remained standing around my horse and could not take their eyes off my rifle. Two barrels on one gun and the daintily worked percussion locks seemed to arouse their greatest interest and approval. I did not much care for the fact that these savages liked my things so well. (P. 129)

While I was conversing as well as I could with the chief, who seemed intent on gaining my confidence, the abovementioned woman and five or six others came close. The former brought with her an iron mortar and a pot of the same metal. In the mortar she pulverized coffee, which then was boiled in the pot. . . . As far as my conversation with the chieftain was concerned, he first gave me to understand that he could recognize from the color of my hair and eyes that I belong to those people who come from the direction of the sunrise, and who are respected by his people, because they keep agreements and promises as correctly as the Comanches themselves. But those people who live there (he pointed north) had several times broken their treaties, and every one of these whom the Comanches could get into their power, they would without much ado—now he jumped up with wild glances, took out his scalping knife and made a movement across his forehead with it. I shuddered involuntarily and almost felt that cut.

Now the woman I have mentioned before brought two small turtle shells full of coffee, of which the chief got one and I the other. This coffee, although without cream and sugar, was very good. Upon my asking where they obtained the coffee, he pointed to the south (Mexico, where the Comanches undertake raids every year). After the coffee had been sipped, the chief again lighted his little pipe, which consisted of a small clay head and a short reed stem, and, after he had smoked a few puffs, he gave it to me as a present (I have the pipe to this day).

Now I wanted to give him a present too, but did not know what: I showed him some percussion caps and since he apparently liked them very much I gave him a number of them. On this occasion my compass came into my hands: I showed it to the chief and was

no little surprised to see that he knew its peculiar power and use. He showed the compass to the others and probably explained its advantages to them, because all of them listened very attentively. When I prepared to continue my travels, the chief indicated to me that in the northwestern direction I would find many troops of Comanches and that none of them would do me any harm. On my departure the men uttered a short but loud ejaculation, probably a farewell. With a lighter heart I rode on and, although I first took a northwestern direction as if I wanted to ride to the other Comanches, as soon as I believed myself no longer observed I changed my course to northeast. I was not particularly anxious to seek out that kind of company. (Pp. 130-131)

Fritz Schlecht's travels had taken him from Houston to La Grange, Gonzales, Seguin, New Braunfels, San Antonio, Fredericksburg, and Austin. His encounter with the Indians took place when he attempted to ride to Castroville from San Antonio. As it turned out, his map was not accurate and he came too far southward. For fifteen days he traveled alone through the wilderness before he saw a white man again. From Austin he rode back to La Grange, where he was the guest of a Mr. Markmann, the brother of one of his fellow passengers on the *Antoinette*.

Finally, Schlecht took the stagecoach to Houston and the steamboat to Galveston, where he boarded the packet boat *G. B. Lamar* to New York. The journey back to Germany via England and Belgium was quite pleasant. Before he recounted it in detail, he summed up his impressions of Texas as follows.

Thus I had left beautiful Texas, which lacks nothing but people, many people, in order to make it into a happy country. A hundred years from now, or when the immeasurable prairies and forests will be cultivated, I am certain that the bane of the present inhabitants, the persistent fevers, will also have vanished or at least very much diminished.

Even though some travelers, or rather "writers" may see fit to despise this land and its present inhabitants and to drag their reputation into the dirt, no one will be able to deny that Texas is very beautiful and exceedingly fertile beyond our imagination. . . .

It is true, particularly in Galveston and Houston, that there are among the present inhabitants many adventurers and criminals who have fled from other countries; but it is just as true that one holds his possessions here far more safely than in London or Berlin. By far the largest number of Texas residents are honorable people and cannot be dirtied by the mud that is slung on them by those who know Texas at best from a map. A farmer who has settled in the wilderness, built a house, made fences, and cultivated land is to be respected for this very reason, since it takes great energy and endurance to surmount the hardships and difficulties such a colonization entails. It is quite different when a settler has to fell the tree trunks needed for his house, when he has to move them and fit them together himself, than when one in Germany only has to pay the money and the house is set up. (Pp. 152-153)

German domestics are a very sought after commodity in the cities, and a girl who can do anything at all gets ten to fifteen dollars monthly; a nurse for children gets up to six dollars per month. The relationship of the servant to master and mistress is here entirely different from that in Germany, because here master and servant are of the same rank, while in Germany the servants often are made to feel the superiority of their employers quite tactlessly. No one ever asks a servant to do anything on a Sunday; whatever must be done on this day will be done by the employers.

Unmarried women who come to Texas, no matter how they look, can count upon knowing in a very short time the happiness and sufferings of the married state, because there is a great shortage of women. That seems very understandable to me, since we can certainly assume that twenty unmarried men will sooner emigrate before one single female will make such a decision. That also will change in time!

Whoever wants to farm in Texas, i.e., to pursue agriculture, will quite certainly find a livelihood free from cares, but he must be content with purely material things and forgo all enjoyments of social life. What that means one can only judge for himself on an isolated farm. (Pp. 155-156)

It appears that Fritz Schlecht valued the enjoyments of social life very highly. When he decided to take his family to Texas and to settle near Bellville in 1858, it was not long before he founded the *Concordia Gesangverein* (singing club). A historical marker has been placed at the location where the first meetings were held in the Schlechts' family home. It must have been very difficult in those days to obtain sheet music, so the parts for the different choir voices were painstakingly copied by hand. A handwritten volume of music for the second tenor voice shows the meticulous script of Fritz Schlecht. He is also the author of a humorous song for the first anniversary of the *Concordia*. The book contains only the words, not the melody; it is quite likely that the poem was sung to some well-known tune.

Schlecht and his wife Henrietta (*née* Roensch, 1818-1886) had two daughters, Clara (1844-1909) and Anna (1846-1928). Clara inherited many of her father's talents and interests. She was keenly interested in nature, loved to sketch and paint, and filled many tiny booklets with poems of her own composition. Her life is documented by numerous diaries, and from these diaries emerges a romantic love story that deserves to be celebrated by a novelist.

In 1860, when Clara was about sixteen years old, a young man from Hamburg, Arnold Matthaei (1836-1888), came to Bellville. His father was a wealthy businessman, but Arnold, a younger son, did not like to sit in dusty offices and had studied agriculture and brewing. On the advice of a Mr. Anthor (the surveyor who laid out the city of Bellville) Arnold came to Texas, where he hoped to become independent sooner than would have been possible in Germany.

Soon, however, the Civil War broke out. Arnold, although he was not yet an American citizen, volunteered to serve in the Confederate Army in 1862. He became an officer, fought with "Waul's Legion" and after many sufferings and deprivations was taken prisoner at the battle of Vicksburg by the troops of General Grant. As an officer, he was taken to Johnson's Island in Lake Erie. His father eventually succeeded, with the help of the Hamburg Senate, in having his son freed. Arnold had to leave America until the end of the war.

In the meantime, Clara Schlecht was torn between hope and despair. Many months passed without a word from her beloved Arnold. Her diaries of 1862-1865 contain, between accounts of daily chores and weather conditions, many exclamations and little verses alluding to her love.

On April 14, 1865, Clara entered with great emotion the news of Lincoln's assassination.

Miller brought us the sad news that our great beloved president Lincoln has been murdered by a Southern scoundrel, with a pistol shot at the theatre in Washington. They have caught the murderer; his name is Booth. . . . Vice president Andreas Johnston will now take his position. He will never be able to replace him. . . . Eternal fame to his memory! His deeds will be an imperishable laurel wreath upon his tomb!

Wednesday, the 17th of May, she notes:

August Sander wrote that there is peace. Mr. Koch was here and told us also that we have peace. In Galveston waves the flag of the United States. There is peace, peace! Praise be to God! Arnold, I greet you!

After much waiting, fears, and doubts, Clara writes on September 7, 1865:

My thoughts were where they always are. I took my sewing and sat by the door with Mother and Anna. Frank came and brought us a letter from—A. Matthaei!—my God, how I thank You. . . . At supper I laid the dear letter under Father's plate. Later, after our visitors had gone, Father took the letter and opened it. After the envelope was off, there appeared another one, addressed to me, to my inexpressible delight. I sat there cold as ice, trembling with love, and read the letter: it also contained a portrait of the man whom alone in this world I have loved so long. I saw his dear, handsome countenance and a moment of highest bliss came upon me from the bright heavens. May God bless you for this, A. M. The letter indicated to me that Matthaei, as answer to my letter of last year, at once had made a declaration that I should be his own. This declaration he takes back, however, after having announced it to his parents. His father has advised him not to enter into such a relationship until he can offer something he has acquired by himself. Well, perhaps the good Lord will someday give me the man of my choice after all. . . .

Finally the day came of which Clara Schlecht had been dreaming for so many years. On June 20, 1866, Arnold Matthaei came back to Bellville and on the same day asked Clara's parents for her hand in marriage. The engagement took place the very same day, and Clara was deeply grateful to God and to Arnold's family in far-away Hamburg. The young man also kept a diary of his voyage from Bremen to Galveston and the trip to Houston and Bellville. His entries are not nearly as emotional as Clara's. On Tuesday, June 19, he writes:

Traveled at ten o'clock to Hempstead, met there with Fritz Schlecht who had come to take me home with him. On that evening we only got as far as the Brazos River. The ferry had already left and we could not cross the river. We had to camp out.

Wednesday, June 20:

We rode, but until Does Creek with only one horse. Then to the Piney Settlement, where I was expected with great longing. In the afternoon my engagement to Clara Schlecht took place. A happy day.

Arnold Matthaei selected a homesite and built a house for himself and Clara with the help and advice of his destined father-in-law. The wedding was celebrated on March 2, 1867. Arnold noted in his diary,

"The most important day of my life, my wedding day with my Clara. . . . We were very merry, had a rich repast."

On the next day, a Sunday, the young couple rode on horseback to their new home. The following years were not easy. Arnold had to struggle to make ends meet, working the farm and brewing beer. Clara's first and second child died only a few days after they were born. She was heartbroken and found comfort only through the love and understanding of her husband. Her parents and her sister also remained very close to her. Hardly a day went by that Anna (who never married) did not come to visit and to help with household chores. Just as frequently Clara's mother or father came by to see her. Her diaries afford us a glimpse into the daily life of these early settlers. Here are a few examples:

December 5, 1867: In the morning nice weather, some northwind, then again wind from the east. I got some eggs from Regenbachs. One egg was already chirping and I put it in a warm place. Masmann came. Arnold is brewing. I was bottling some beer, it looks splendid. When I wanted to use the eggs, I saw that chickens were in all of them. Arnold took them back and got me some good ones. In the afternoon I finished the tobacco pouch. In the evening Arnold read to me. Our pigs are getting nice and fat.

December 11, 1867: Nice in the morning; Masmann came. I washed the room because it had become terribly dirty yesterday; about 11 o'clock we ate our partridges. Then my dear Arnold drove to Cat Spring in order to buy bottles and stoppers. I worked on the pillow. Toward evening I went to meet Arnold and waited at the creek until the moon had come up a bit. Then I went home to see if everything was still all right, afterwards I stayed at the creek until Arnold came; a beautiful moonlit night. Arnold brought me tallow, kerosene, and a sausage machine.

March 3, 1868: Nice in the morning; Arnold is pitching out beer barrels, I altered my brown gingham dress, made the waist with a drawstring. Brace Roach came by, riding on May's horse, the big fine dappled one, to offer it for sale at \$100. Arnold tried it out with a saddle and before the cart. Brace Roach stayed over noon. In the afternoon Arnold went to Constant to mail the lottery letter, but could not get change for paper money anywhere. Toward the evening I went out twice to get firewood, then went a little way to meet Arnold. He brought along a bottle of kerosene and Schiller's poems. One year ago today we moved to our own homestead.—In the evening a big possum came and chased our hen from her eggs: the hen did not return to the eggs. We put a trap in the nest and the same night we caught the thief, a big fat thing. Arnold killed it with the axe.

March 4, 1868: Nice in the morning; Arnold went early to borrow a horse from Constant; he wants to ride to Roach and buy Tassy: the time went awfully slow for me. In the afternoon I finished mending the towel. Towards evening I went to meet Arnold, I found violets and took also some vines to plant by the house, in the meantime Arnold had come home another way. Anna sent me a little letter along, all are well. Arnold did not bring the horse yet, Mrs. May wants to send it Sunday. Arnold read to me.

March 9, 1868: In the morning cloudy, stormy. Arnold is brewing—he is not feeling well. I made him tea of camomile, he got better soon. In the afternoon Arnold went to Madame Regenbrecht to borrow a riding skirt for me, I rode on our Tassy to Engelkings' for a visit, stayed there until about evening and also bought myself whalebone for 20 cents. In the evening Willie came and drank a bottle of beer, Arnold read to me.

I was not able to ascertain why the young Matthaei moved to New York for a year, but in 1870 they returned to Bellville for good. That year their son Wolfgang was born, and their daughter Edith followed one year later. Slowly Arnold Matthaei succeeded in getting his family established. He became a respected member of the community with a lively interest in public affairs. He took part in the meetings of the agricultural society (*Landwirtschaftlicher Verein*) and for a number of years was elected tax assessor and collector for Austin County. Piney Settlement was about two miles from Bellville. When the children were young, the parents and Anna Schlecht took turns in teaching them. Arnold also personally taught both of them to play the piano. Later he had a small schoolhouse built across the street from the Matthaei home and hired teachers for all the children of Piney Settlement. It was a happy occasion for the family when they were able to travel to Germany for a visit in 1881. They spent several weeks in Hamburg and in Bunzlau and went sightseeing to Switzerland, but their real home was now the Bellville community in Texas. Unfortunately, Arnold died of sunstroke in 1888, only fifty-two years old.

These immigrants from Germany, who had toiled so hard to establish themselves in a developing country, were able to send their son to Harvard University for the study of law. Wolfgang Matthaei found a wife during his years away from home, but after finishing his studies returned with his family to Bellville, where he practiced law until his death in 1926.

His sister Edith was a remarkable personality in her own right, with a keen mind and a great love for learning. She was also an accomplished pianist who could sightread any piece of music. On the occasion of her death, her son Franz Zeiske most eloquently expressed the emotions of her family and her many friends:

However wonderful, remarkable and commendable a trained, alert and informed mind may be, my mother's intellectual accomplishments were dwarfed by her character. If ever the quality of love was personified, in a mortal being, it was in my mother. Never, during the fifty years that I have known her, have I ever heard her speak ill of anyone. Truly she hated nothing that God has made. . . . (The Bellville Times, February 19, 1959)

It was her musical talent that caused Edith Matthaei to meet her future husband. Oscar Zeiske was born in Bernstadt, Germany, and went to Breslau, the capital of the province of Silesia, while he was still a child. When he was eighteen years old, his father, who was a hotel manager, sent Oscar to Zürich to study hotel management. But the son was not very interested in that field; he wanted rather to perfect himself in the French and English languages,

which he had studied at school. He worked in Brussels and in London for a while. Then one of his former school friends wrote glowing letters from Bellville, where his family had emigrated several years before. So in 1888, instead of going back to Germany, where he would have had to serve in the Kaiser's army for two years, Oscar Zeiske persuaded his family to join him in emigrating to the U.S.A. They went by train to Amsterdam, by boat to Hull, across England to Liverpool, by boat to New York, and by train to Bellville, where they arrived in August.

Ernst Zeiske, the father, bought a farm. But since no one in the family had any experience with agriculture, they soon decided to move into town, where the father opened a tailor shop. Oscar worked in various general merchandise stores. He was an accomplished violinist and soon met Edith Matthaei, who was well known as a pianist. Their marriage took place in 1900. A newspaper clipping from the Bellville *Times*, after commenting on the ceremony and the reception, reads as follows:

The bride is a charming girl, lovable and accomplished, the possessor of that noble element in character which bespeaks nature's true gentlewoman. To know her is to admire and to love her. The man into whose keeping she has intrusted her life's happiness comes of sturdy stock. He has shown by his easy strides over life's stony road and his increasing bounds with the friendship and confidence of his fellowman that he is of the true material and is deserving of the sweet woman he has won. The *Times* joins their hosts of friends in congratulations and wishes for a long, happy and profitable voyage o'er life's fitful sea. (Clipping without date)

Oscar and Edith Zeiske's marriage lasted fifty-nine years, so the *Times'* good wishes can be considered prophetic. The family moved several times, sometimes for business opportunities, sometimes for the education of their children. In 1932 Oscar and Edith returned to Bellville, where Oscar joined the staff of the *Times*. His brother Richard had acquired the paper in 1912. Following in his grandfather-in-law's footsteps, Oscar Zeiske became the director of the *Concordia Gesangverein* and served in that capacity for twenty-five years. For the seventy-fifth anniversary of the society that had been founded by Fritz Schlecht, Oscar Zeiske directed the chorus and Edith Zeiske accompanied on the piano. At the hundredth anniversary, in 1960, their daughter Evelyn was the piano accompanist.

The importance of the singing societies in the social life of the German American communities can best be understood when we read the recollections of a Mrs. Springborn of Houston, whose father was among the first members of the Piney *Concordia*. On the occasion of the seventy-ninth anniversary, she had this to say:

My father sang for fifty-seven years in the *Concordia*, from the opening day until his death when he was eighty-four years old. In those days we had no place to go for amusement. Piney *Concordia* was the meeting place on Sunday afternoon for all of the farmers and their families. It was the red letter day of the week. While children played, the women

visited, exchanging recipes, talking of the old home across the seas, of the hopes for their children's future and of the farms. The men sang and sang. In this way German culture and the songs of the old home were kept alive.

We always left before sundown on those Sunday afternoons: our only lights were torches set among the trees and they made a wonderful light to us. Families would drive up in buckboards, wagons, and a few in buggies. If you owned a buggy and came to the singing in one you were pretty rich. The boys and girls rode horses. We all had our own horse to ride. Sometimes a girl would come with her family in the wagon but most of the time our beaus came for us and we would ride our horses down to Piney *Concordia*.

The reporter who had interviewed Mrs. Springborn concludes his article with these words:

The spirit of those hardy pioneers seemed to hover over the thousands gathered at *Piney Bellville Concordia* Sunday afternoon as the singing started with the Brenham Concert Band . . . playing "America." Every man, woman and child in the audience sang enthusiastically, standing with uncovered heads in the very spot which their ancestors had helped to preserve for freedom, and as the words, "My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty" echoed through the trees, a spirit of contentment and happiness settled over the singers representing every German-American community in the southern part of the state. (*Bellville Times*, May 29, 1939)

The diaries and documents on which I have based my research into the Schlecht-Matthaei-Zeiske family's history end around 1900. But I wish to mention at least briefly what became of Oscar and Edith Zeiske's four children, who were born between 1901 and 1908 and who are all still living in Dallas and Bellville.

Arnold Zeiske, the oldest, studied at Columbia University and is an accountant. Hildegard Zeiske became a school teacher and taught mathematics for many years. Evelyn Zeiske studied law, but is also proficient in foreign languages and plays piano and organ. Franz Zeiske, the youngest, was the publisher of the *Bellville Times* for thirty-five years. He also was elected to serve in the State of Texas House of Representatives in 1951-1952, where he succeeded in passing a bill for the protection of an endangered species of wildlife.

As we have seen, members of this German-Texas pioneer family have served their new homeland as farmers, craftsmen, scholars, musicians, and soldiers, even legislators. With admiration and pride we can say, when studying the history of Texas:

"Da waren Deutsche auch dabei!"

NOTES

I wish to thank Miss Hildegard Zeiske and her sister and brothers for letting me use their family papers and for giving me freely any information requested.

The excerpts from Fritz Schlecht's book *Mein Ausflug nach Texas* (Bunzlau, 1851) and from the handwritten diaries were translated from the German by me. The obituary by Franz Zeiske and some other newspaper clippings are quoted in the original English.